In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for describing a problem in a network comprising a ~~number~~ plurality of network entities, the method comprising:

defining a service as a channel, from an originating network entity to a destination network entity, modulated by a dither tone specific to said channel, said originating network entity and said destination network entity belonging to said plurality of network entities, said service being carried by a path in the network;

selecting a subset of alarms associated with [[a]] said service~~, said service having a unique identifier and being carried by a path in the network~~, the subset of alarms being selected from a list of alarms in the network;

grouping alarms in the subset of alarms associated with said service in a number of groups of alarms, each group of alarms being associated with said service and with a respective network entity from among said plurality of network entities;

~~arranging~~ ordering the groups of alarms according to a sequence in which they appear in a traversal of the path of the service in the network; and

transforming each alarm in each group of alarms into a problem description for the service.

2. (Previously presented) A method as described in claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a corrective procedure in response to at least one alarm in said subset of alarms.

3. (Currently amended) A method as described in claim 1, wherein said grouping further associates each group of alarms with a type of said network entity, where a type of said network entity is one of a node, ~~a bay, a quadrant,~~ a slot, a card and a port.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently amended) A method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of grouping further comprises a step of associating at least one alarm in the subset of alarms with at least two network entities from among said ~~number~~ plurality of network entities.

6. (Currently amended) A method for describing a problem in a network comprising a ~~number~~ plurality of network entities, the method comprising:

defining a service as a channel, having a unique identifier, connecting an originating network entity to a destination network entity, wherein said originating network entity and said destination network entity belong to said plurality of network entities, and wherein said service is carried by a path in the network;

selecting a subset of alarms associated with [[a]] said service, ~~said service having a unique identifier and being carried by a path in the network,~~ the subset of alarms being selected from a list of alarms in the network;

grouping alarms in the subset of alarms associated with said service in a number of groups of alarms, each group of alarms being associated with said service and with a respective network entity from among said plurality of network entities;

~~arranging~~ ordering the groups of alarms according to a sequence in which they appear in a traversal of the path of the service in the network; and

transforming each alarm in each group of alarms into a problem description for the service;

wherein the step of transforming each alarm further comprises the step of forming at least one template including text substitution markers.

7. (Currently amended) A method as described in claim 6, wherein the text substitution markers correspond to specific network entities from among said plurality of network entities.

8. (Currently amended) A method as described in claim 6 wherein said path is a two-way path and the step of ~~arranging~~ ordering the groups of alarms comprises ~~arranging~~ ordering the groups of alarms in a direction of the path from a beginning of the path to an end of the path.

9. (Currently amended) A method as described in claim 6 wherein said path is a two-way path and the step of ~~arranging~~ ordering the groups of alarms comprises ~~arranging~~ ordering the groups of alarms in a direction of the path from an end of the path to a beginning of the path.

10. (Currently amended) A method for describing a problem in a network comprising a ~~number~~ plurality of network entities, the method comprising:

defining a service as a channel, from an originating network entity to a destination network entity, modulated by a dither tone specific to said channel, said originating network entity and destination network entity belonging to said plurality of network entities, said service being carried by a path in the network;

selecting a subset of alarms associated with [[a]] said service, ~~said service having a unique identifier and being carried by a path in the network,~~ the subset of alarms being selected from a list of alarms in the network;

grouping the subset of alarms associated with said service in a number of groups of alarms, each group of alarms being associated with said service and with a respective network entity from among said plurality of network entities;

~~arranging~~ ordering the groups of alarms according to a sequence in which they appear in a traversal of the path of the service in the network; and

transforming each alarm in each group of alarms into a problem description for the service;

wherein said problem triggers at least one of:

a missing channel identification alarm;

an unexpected ~~channel identification~~ dither tone alarm;

a loss of signal alarm; and

a channel power out of range alarm.

11. (Original) A method as described in claim 1, wherein the description is a verbal description.

12. (Currently amended) A method as described in claim [[11]] [1], wherein the description is a text description.

13. (Original) A method as described in claim 1, wherein the description is a pictorial description